

MAY 19, 1976

"HOPE AGAINST HOPE"  
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES -- BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI ON THE SERVICE CENTER OF A SELF-HELP FELLOWSHIP OF FAMILIES WHO REFUSE TO LOSE HOPE IN THE MOST HOPELESS SITUATIONS. YOUR REPORTER IS \_\_\_\_\_.

NARR: IT ALL STARTED OVER A KITCHEN TABLE. BOB, A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, WAS BESET WITH EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS ROOTED IN ALCOHOLISM, EVEN THOUGH HE NEVER TOUCHED A DRINK HIMSELF. BOB'S FATHER WAS AN ALCOHOLIC, AND THIS AFFECTED THE FAMILY LIFE. BOB LONGED FOR THE FELLOWSHIP OF OTHER TEENAGERS WITH SIMILAR PROBLEMS. WHEN HE MET SOME, HE BEGAN TO CALL ON THEM REGULARLY, EXCHANGING EXPERIENCES AND DISCUSSING THE GUIDELINES SUPPLIED BY A FAMILY ORGANIZATION BELIEVED TO BE A TREATMENT TOOL. NOW, THERE ARE FELLOWSHIPS LIKE THIS IN MANY COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES, WHERE THERE ARE FAMILIES DETERMINED NOT TO ABANDON, BUT TO HELP AN ALCOHOLIC HUSBAND, PARENT OR CHILD. THEY TOOK THE NAMES AL-ANON AND ALATEEN.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- MORRIS

"AL-ANON IS A FELLOWSHIP OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH A DRINKING PROBLEM, USUALLY A PERSON THAT IS MARRIED TO AN ALCOHOLIC. WE COME TOGETHER TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCE, OUR STRENGTH, AND OUR HOPE TO HELP EACH OTHER, AND TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO ELIMINATE THE PROBLEMS OF THIS DISEASE. WE DO FEEL THAT THIS IS A DISEASE."

NARR: THIS WAS KAY MORRIS, AN ELDERLY LADY ASSOCIATED WITH THE ALCOHOLIC CLINIC IN ARLINGTON, A SUBURBAN COMMUNITY NEAR WASHINGTON, D.C. SHE RECALLS HOW TWENTY YEARS AGO, WIVES OF MEN ATTENDING THE MEETINGS OF THE LOCAL ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GROUP USED TO WAIT TOGETHER IN A NEARBY AREA. THEY PREPARED COFFEE AND CAKES TO BE SERVED AFTERWARDS. AS THEY TALKED AND CONFIDED IN EACH OTHER, THEY FOUND OUT THAT THEY WERE GIVING EACH OTHER STRENGTH AND CONSOLATION, THAT TOGETHER THEY ARRIVED EASIER AT CONCLUSIONS AND DECISIONS, LEADING TO AN IMPROVEMENT OF THE SITUATION IN THEIR FAMILIES. SUDDENLY, IT CAME TO THEM THAT THEY SHOULD FORM AN ORGANIZATION FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT AND OF OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY, AND ALSO TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN FORMING THEIR OWN SIMILAR GROUPS.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- MORRIS

"AL-ANON COMES FROM ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. IT WAS SHORTENED DOWN TO BE SIMILAR TO ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. AND THEN ALTEEN WAS THE NAME THAT WAS GIVEN TO THE ORGANIZATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE USUALLY THE CHILDREN OF AN ALCOHOLIC PARENT. THIS ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN GOING FOR QUITE A NUMBER OF YEARS TOO. MANY, MANY YOUTHS, BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS, HAVE BEEN HELPED BY ALATEEN."

NARR: EACH AL-ANON ORGANIZATION SPONSORS AN ALATEEN GROUP. SOME OF THESE TEENAGERS ARE VERY DISTURBED BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS IN THEIR HOMES. SOMETIMES THEY FAIL IN SCHOOL, AND THEY WOULD DROP OUT IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE HELP AND SUPPORT THEY ARE GETTING THROUGH THIS FELLOWSHIP. AT EACH OF THE ALATEEN MEETINGS, THERE ARE ALSO ONE OR TWO ADULTS TO GUIDE THEM. DORIS IS A MOTHER OF TEENAGE CHILDREN AND WIFE OF AN ALCOHOLIC. SHE IS VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN THE WORK WITH

NARR: THE ALATEEN. JUST LIKE ALL MEMBERS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (CONT'D) AND THEIR FAMILIES, SHE PREFERS TO KEEP HER ANONYMITY. THIS PERMITS HER TO BE MORE SINCERE IN DISCLOSING HER STORY.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- DORIS

"WHEN I FIRST CALLED TO GET HELP FROM AL-ANON, I WAS A VERY MIXED UP PERSON.. (THE SITUATION WAS THAT) I HAD A HUSBAND WHO DRANK EVERY DAY... THERE WAS ALSO VIOLENCE IN MY HOME. I HAD AT ONE TIME TRIED TO KILL MY HUSBAND. AND THAT FRIGHTENED ME THAT I COULD HAVE THAT MUCH HATE WITHIN ME. AND IT FRIGHTENED ME THAT HE WAS VIOLENT WHEN HE DRANK, BECAUSE I NEVER KNEW WHAT HE'D DO... I CAME TO THE PROGRAM AND THEY BEGAN TO TELL ME WHAT I COULD DO TO COPE WITH THIS SORT OF THINGS. AND SLOWLY I GAINED SOME COURAGE FROM THE OTHER PEOPLE, GOING TO THE MEETINGS AND LISTENING, HAVING PEOPLE HELP ME INDIVIDUALLY... AT THE MEETINGS WE TALK ABOUT SPECIFIC SUBJECTS SUCH AS COURAGE, SERENITY, FAITH. IT IS A VERY SPIRITUAL PROGRAM... WE ALSO TALK ABOUT VERY PRACTICAL WAYS TO HANDLE THINGS, NOT TO AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION...EVEN SO, HE CONTINUED TO DRINK EVERY DAY. HE CHANGED AS I CHANGED IN THE PROGRAM, AND THE VIOLENCE STOPPED."

NARR: ALL MEMBERS OF AL-ANON ARE VOLUNTEER WORKERS IN HELPING OTHERS IN WHATEVER WAY THEY CAN. THEY ARE AVAILABLE ON THE PHONE IF SOMEONE IS IN TROUBLE OR JUST WANTS TO TALK. LISTENING IS IMPORTANT. SOMETIMES HEARING THEMSELVES, PEOPLE REALIZE WHAT THEY ARE DOING AND THEY CAN SEE SOLUTIONS. SUSAN, ANOTHER AL-ANON MEMBER, HAS BEEN MARRIED TO AN ALCOHOLIC FOR ELEVEN YEARS.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- SUSAN

"THEY OPEN UP THE MEETING WITH THE SERENITY PRAYER, AND IT SAYS: 'GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE, THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN, AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCES.'"

NARR: SUSAN USED HER PROBLEMS WITH HER FRIENDS. SHE FELT A TREMENDOUS NEED TO UNLOAD HER BURDEN, AND EXPLAIN THE ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR OF HER FAMILY. SHE KEPT ASKING OTHERS

NARR: (CONT'D) AND HERSELF, WHY ALL THIS HAD HAPPENED TO HER, WHY THE MAN SHE LOVED WAS A VICTIM OF SUCH TERRIBLE SICKNESS? BUT HER FRIENDS DID NOT UNDERSTAND. ONLY PERSONS WHO WENT THROUGH THE SAME CAN UNDERSTAND. WHEN SUSAN JOINED AL-ANON NINE YEARS AGO, SHE MADE NEW FRIENDS THERE AND THEY HELPED HER TO OVERCOME HER GUILT, TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT IT WAS NOT HER FAULT THAT HER HUSBAND DRANK.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- SUSAN

"I WANTED EVERYONE THERE TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO, WHAT SHOULD I DO AND GUIDE MY LIFE. AND THEY DIDN'T DO THAT. AT FIRST I WAS A LITTLE UPSET, BECAUSE I WANTED THEM TO TAKE MY HAND AND TO SHOW ME WHICH ROAD TO TAKE. BUT THEY WERE JUST THERE, AND THEY WOULD TAKE MY HAND, BUT THEY WOULDN'T LEAD ME...IT IS YOUR PROGRAM, YOUR WAY OF LIVING, IT IS YOUR LIFE, AND THEY LET YOU LIVE IT THE WAY YOU WANT TO LIVE."

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE: U.S.A. -- PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. NEXT \_\_\_\_\_ ANOTHER DATELINE.

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